

## Interview with 65 year old white male,, Mountain Rest, South Carolina (part 1 of 3) (Transcription)

W1 Side A <unintelligible text> - A---M2A

q Q. There wadn't any doctors around here, then?

<unintelligible text> A. No,<unintelligible text> didn't know nothing. And they had, I remember, <unintelligible text> sick people and he learnt a whole lot of what to know. Do you see <unintelligible text> people <unintelligible text> herbs and they doctored the land. And I'm talk'in about my harper--they did have ether or something to put people asleep with and when they put 'em to sleep, he said they done a poor job, that he tried to let him use a knife and give him a chance, but they wouldn't let him use his knife. And he said then they would make him set up <unintelligible text> stay up with 'em till they died when they <unintelligible text> if he would've used a knife, he would give him a chance that he <unintelligible text>

Q. Do you use any of these old Indian herb recipes now, or know of any?

A. Yeah, oh yeah, we use it all the time. I hardly ever go to a doctor.

Q. What are some of the things you use, in what ways do you use them?

A. Well, you make medicine out of it and the most I use, other people use other things, but I hardly ever have the elements that they have, but the <gap> to make cough medicine

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out of. We take a <gap> real good. It's poison; you have to know how to use it. You dry it to make it more poisonous, but it's better that way. And you get it off the north side of the tree, where the bark's thicker, probably the Indians learn 'em that, that's where they know north from south, north side of the tree has got the thickest bark on it. That bark makes the best medicine, and then they used other stuff for back ailments and stuff that way. They several them, it's real good, the <gap> it's awful good; I use it; I have back problems.

Q. Now, what is it you use?

A. <gap> I'm gonna dig it when it's a bloomin' <gap> and then it reproduce and then I get the root off of it to use later this winter <unintelligible text> can't get up, you know, and got a brother-in-law, he goes and has weights tied to his legs, put him in traction, usually takes him a month or two when I usually get better in a week.

Q. How do you use this? <unintelligible text>

A. You make a key out of it <gap> We used to have to dig a hole <gap> like <gap> and put cold water down in there and <gap> and rot <gap> We would have to put it now and keep it from souring. It's bad to sour <gap> you want to make your tea out of it, it's cloudy; and now you got refrigerators, I always use

a half gallon of orange juice can, flat bottle to put it in and use it as one bottle <gap> Sometimes, you don't have to use a bottle, just about a half a bottle.

Q. How's it taste?

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A. It tastes kinda bad but, the thing about it, you know it's a helping you. You'll know in two hours after you drink a glass <gap> That's right, it really works. And then we have another one. If you can get any corn whiskey, you put it in it. It's good for your back. It makes you stay young. I'll drink to that.

Q. Where did you get your corn whiskey around here?

A. Oh, it's hard to get now; they just don't have it anymore, but I guess, if you don't got any you have to make it.

Q. But I'm not gonna ask you if you ever made any. I'm sure you might know how do people go around making it, particularly in the older days?

A. They know how to make it. They had two <gap> was beat in the sand out of soft copper, sheet copper and the <gap> was cut in circle and put together. <gap> It would look like a ball <gap>

Q. Then what oil would you mix together?

A. To make pure corn whiskey they used pure corn. They made the corn, ground the mill used the corn mill to make the mat, and they made the <gap> out of corn, sprouted it, grounded it to make two types: one, green corn malt; and oven-dry corn malt, and you could tell what a fellow had been drinking just by smelling his breath which type. And you didn't have to get close to smell that corn whiskey; you could smell it a few steps away.

Q. Was this a formula that you needed sugar?

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A. Didn't use no sugar. This <gap> corn they got won't make any sugar, but the corn they use would. They used oat and <gap> corn and <gap> that Tennessee red <gap> They had one corn that was <gap> get two gallons to the bushel of pure corn.

Q. <gap> probably pretty much the way of life, in particularly in older days

A. Yeah, and I asked my grandma's older sister told me it come down here and worked <gap> when she was a little girl and I asked <gap> when people made all the whiskey they wanted. Did they lay around drunk? And she said you never see nobody drunk. If you did, he was

<gap> People planned anybody got drunk they was <gap> and she said everybody wanted to be somebody and you never see a drunk. They always was sober. You suggest to take a little when they felt bad, sat on the table wasn't no law against it. These people <gap> law they didn't know it. They didn't have no law to put up with.

Q. What is the purpose now, you don't read about it much anymore because, like you say, there's not that many of them. Well, they always bustin' up the liquor <gap> If it was a way of life, why do they want to come in; and why is it against the law now?

A. Well, you see, the laws we had, we were Scott-Irish people and the people that made the laws was English and they was always passing laws that we <gap> but same <gap> island now; they don't like to abide by the English laws; they're into it all the time. England has to keep <gap> and the thing about it when these people come over here and come down to Virginia and got that German gunsmith to make them a gun, and they know how to make powder; there was plenty of lead in this part of the country, they run their own

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bullets and England come over there to tell them what to do; they licked them down here <gap> that's the turning point. I hear them talking about ways of communicating, but there was trails on the mountain tops and the <gap> they run those mountain tops and told them what the <gap> was doin'. These people were staying out of that war and that's when they went to claim that they mistreated a woman's girl and she was nothing but a kid while the man of the house was away and they went down there and whipped 'em and <gap> They don't touch Charleston coming on up and that's what happened. They stopped them and that was turning point.

Q. Well, these mountain people were pretty smart saying that.

A. Well they were smart enough to live and make corn meals to grind their corn on and make <unintelligible text> to hold their whiskey and when they went out in the woods and cut down a white oak tree to make that <gap> they didn't have to test <gap> to see whether it held or not, they rinsed it out and went to catch the whiskey and puttin' the whiskey in. And then now, better still, they put the hoops on out of the hickory split open, and that's the way not even the <gap> like it that way drive it down and I wished I had kept one of those <gap> would hold anything and then that groove around it--they call that the crow--I think I've got one at home--they put down in it and jerk it and that cuts that groove around; and they have another thing they call a compass and when they put that on <gap> electric light and when they step that around six times and set her up and mark the head of that <gap> and shaved it down to the <gap> it was water tight, it hold water. <gap> And do you know what they made a lot of those out of? Well a hickory stick didn't even put together and put a <gap> in it

bend it over and put that spark in each end and tie the wire hickory piece of bark around it; that's the way they set it, just bend it. And they were so particular that the inside of that

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<gap> had to be perfect. They would never see, I've got one or two of them in the house too, inside <gap> that they shaved those <gap> with.

Q. Did you have to age this corn whiskey, or was it just a way to hold it?

A. That was a way of holdin' <gap> but it was good when it's first made. And they had to use a back; they double stillled it <gap> out of their beer; it took seven stillfuls of beer to make one stillful of <gap> and washed one of their barrels out good; they made huge barrels out of its wooden <gap> washed it out good and poured the segments in that till they got seven stillfuls and then wash the still out and pour that up and kept it right then and built the <gap> to it and run the <gap> They waited till the beer got to boiling before they capped it, but the <gap> they didn't waste none of that steam <gap> and they had a little vial <gap> to <gap> They fill it up like about, it was a long vial probably five inches long and maybe five inches in diameter and it had a nic on it, tied the string around that and drop it in the <gap> where it was running <gap> and bring it up and bump it and they can tell by looking, but had there been a doubt, they'd run their arm down in the <gap> dropped twenty, twenty one drops and when <gap>

Q. What would you call high proof?

A. Well, some fellow <gap> some of it and detected it, and he said it was 140 proof, that twenty drop whiskey <gap> he said it was 140. The thing about it, it didn't make you sick to drink it. You had to drink such small amount it didn't upset your stomach. It didn't take much, but tastes sweet and good, it went down easy.

Q. I don't guess any of these wagons that went into Wall Hallow with the cabbages and stuff was all you carried in jars?

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A. They didn't carry jars; they carried those in vases. The thing about it back then, they was big <gap> stout <gap> people; and what we call barrel today, that was a <gap> to them, those 55 and 60 gallon was <gap> Their barrels was much bigger <gap> they called them; they had those bigger to work the beer, but they put the

liquor when they hauled it in those 50, 60 gallon <gap> and my grandma told me they put down <gap> and rolled those <gap> up on them and set them up on the <gap> to the loaded wagons and put two teams of horses to it, and two men would ride in front with their rifles and two behind, and so nobody would bother them; they took their whiskey and sold it, brought open to daylight take it to town and sell it, unload it and come back and that's the way they travelled. Well those rifles, if there was any law, they didn't fool them in time. That's the way to travel. <gap> the first time my grandma ever went to town, she went <gap> of whiskey. She said they had fast horses : the pride in their horses, they kept the best <gap> those horses, they made everything they used clothing, shoes, I've even made homemade shoes that my granny made. Put the soles on out of wooden <gap> I've helped to cut the little blocks different lengths to put <gap> she had a block to work on; take a butcher knife and a hammer and <unintelligible text> we didn't have tin cans and things, anything to hold them and they had to tools to use all <gap> and then one more that had a bit about 4 inches, 3 1/2 inches long and 1/2 inch that was bent down at the end you know the tip, and I asked I said Janet, why do you use a <gap>

Q. Now these were leather shoes?

A. Leather shoes, now. <gap> They used a thin leather off a small animal, either deer or groundhog <gap> and use that leather, they call wing leather and they knowed how to wet the leather with warm water and <gap> it didn't come apart, never come apart. And you didn't wear out a pair of shoes, you outgrewed it, and the next kid got it, got shoes. That's

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the way it's done; they knowd how to tan leather and every <gap> was saved, saved they made the soap out of it, lime the hides with it and they made their harmony, took the <gap> off of the corn with it, use those ashes from the fireplace for everything and nobody was allowed to spit in the fireplace. That was kept clean those ashes; they used them and after they made the soap from them, run their lye, put them up in ash <gap> and made the soap and then used them as fertilizer after <gap>

Q. Where did you get the cloth for the clothes?

A. They made them, made 'em. When I come along in those old houses, you see the Yankees come down what happened the young people went to work in the factories and the old people stayed on until they died out and it went back to the wilderness and old is still in the house. They rotted down with the house; they was heavy. They could

make cloth and the prettiest kind <gap> you ever seen; now they could design 'em just like <gap> I'd wish I got ma to give me; she had one before she died <gap> It was solid white, but it had those designs on it and where it hung off over the bed it had crosses on it, you know that, I don't know tassels or what you call 'em it hung down all around <gap> she never used 'em; she just kept 'em; that was her grandma's. I still got those spinning wheels; my grandma's mammie, Auntie Mae, and I remember who she said <gap> I wore socks, lots of socks; two pair would do you all winter; wool socks made from sheet wool. They sheared the sheeps and get the wool and spin it down <gap> take 'em and they'd clip 'em off the right length, you know, and that <gap> put it in warm water <gap> and when it got so big <gap> they pulled it off and put it in a basket and when it got all <gap> they would put two together and twist it and that would make a bigger thread; they crossed the band to twist it, I saw 'em do it; <gap> it looked like magic, those rolls were white and fluffy piled up on that wheel <gap> that's what they're put there for <gap> happiest people in the world and they didn't have a dime.



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Q. Did they make quilts?

A. Made quilts, I'm telling you, they could make pretty ones. Some they called the Log cabins and I don't know what all kinds they did made but they was pretty. I'm telling you they could make pretty ones, pretty quilts <gap> after the schools got comin' along, they'd get us kids to get a short piece of chalk that got too short to put on; that's the way they made those fans <gap> but before that, they would get 'em a piece of mud where it was dried in the chimney; you know it baked hard but it made a red mark and they used that; yeah, that clay, I've seen them do it.

Q. How'd they get the different colors in the quilts?

A. Well, they'd piece those scraps after they got it; but before they died, they got all their dye out of the wood, if I'd a thought, I'd a brought her a walking stick, Aunt Liza <gap> I made it for her, know exactly where I cut it; I was a kid when I made her that stick, but it's made of dyewood and I remember her telling me : Now, that dye's yellow and I had some <gap> that made a pretty brown, a permanent <gap> They put salt in it to make it fat, I don't know exactly how they did it <gap> but then the maple <gap> they had black sheep there and white sheep and mix

it you gotta gray, but then <gap> and it made it black, too and they wanted a purple: maple bark and copper would make purple, and they <gap> their quilt lining, it'd be solid lining and they'd die them; they'd be purple and they dyed the chairs <gap> and that was the way they painted the chairs <gap> and take a mark and mark the chairs and they'd be a pretty purple; it never peeled, you see, didn't chip off, didn't peel; it was there to <gap> That's the way they worked it.

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Q. And this is just something they painted and handed down to them?

A. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's the reason I know every trade in the wood. My grandfather died probably when I was eight, around eight years old, seven or eight; but from a kid a little kid, I could barely walk. He'd let me go with him to hunt his cattle; I'd always go with him and when I'd give out, he straddled me on his neck and he talked to me and tell me every tree in the wood, and how it's spotted <gap> at a distance where it had the leaves on it in the wintertime and tell me what it was used for and what the herbs is used for, and what kind they use for herbs and then in the spring, we were glad when spring of the year come, we'd go we'd get birch and he would swap one of my granny's old spoons <gap> and he would take it and its ax, never been axed, slip it off <gap> and not hurry back to work and peel the black birch, the kind that the Indians made the canoes and that was smooth, you'd take a spoon and scrape it and I know that's the best stuff I ever tasted.

Q. What kind of taste did it have?

A. Oh, evergreen, and man it was rich; and you swallowed that juice and it gives you strength right then, made yop not hungry and whole head's fine.

Q. Let's go find some.